

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 05740 251244Z
ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9562
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL MONTREAL
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: ETRD, PINT, UR, CA
SUBJECT: SOVIET-CANADIAN RELATIONS

REF: MOSCOW 3583

SUMMARY: SOVIET-CANADIAN RELATIONS REMAIN IN A "HOLD" PATTERN AND MAY BE DETERIORATING SOMEWHAT. SOVIETS HAVE STILL GIVEN NO INDICATION ONE WAY OR THE OTHER WHETHER THEY WILL RETALIATE FOR CANADIAN EXPULSIONS. THE HARDENING SOVIET POSTURE TOWARD CANADA ON CONTINUING CANADIAN PRESS AND PARLIAMENTARY CRITICISM REFLECTS USUAL SOVIET TACTIC TO CAST THE BLAME FOR PROBLEMS ON OTHERS. WE SUSPECT THAT CURRENT SOVIET-CANADIAN DIFFICULTIES MAY DIE DOWN WITH TIME ALTHOUGH SHCHARANSKIY CASE AND COSMOS 984 ALSO HAVE POTENTIAL TO TROUBLE SOVIET-CANADIAN RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 05740 251244Z

1. ON MARCH 16 CANADIAN AMBASSADOR FORD MET AGAIN WITH MFA'S CHIEF, SECOND EUROPEAN DEPARTMENT, V. P. SUSLOV, AT FORD'S REQUEST. CANADIAN EMBOFF HERE TELLS US OTTAWA INSTRUCTED FORD TO CALL ON SUSLOV TO REITERATE CANADIAN POSITION THAT THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT HAS NO CONTROL OVER WHAT CANADIAN PRESS PRINTS OR OPPOSITION MPS SAY, AND

THAT SOVIET UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES IN CANADA, NOT THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT, HAD STIMULATED INCREASE IN CRITICISM OF THE SOVIET UNION IN CANADA. CANADIAN SOURCE THOUGHT THAT OTTAWA'S INSTRUCTIONS WERE IN RESPONSE TO SUSLOV'S MARCH 2 CHARGES REPORTED REFTEL.

2. CANADIAN SOURCE SAID THAT SUSLOV SEIZED THE INITIATIVE AS THE MEETING BEGAN BY READING A STATEMENT CRITICAL OF THE CONTINUING ANTI-SOVIET PRESS AND PARLIAMENTARY CRITICISM IN CANADA, SPECIFICALLY MENTIONING MP TOM COSSIT. THE STATEMENT READ BY SUSLOV ALSO CALLED ON THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT TO TAKE ACTIONS TO QUELL THIS CRITICISM, WHICH IT DECLARED, CANNOT BUT DAMAGE CANADIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS. FOLLOWING SUSLOV'S READING OF SOVIET STATEMENT, FORD PRESENTED THE CANADIAN POSITION (PARA ONE) AND NOTED THAT THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY CLARIFIED THAT ITS POLICY IS TO SEEK BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION.

3. CANADIAN SOURCE BELIEVED THAT SOVIET-CANADIAN RELATIONS CURRENTLY APPEAR TO BE IN A "HOLDING" PATTERN WITH NO CLEAR INDICATION FROM THE SOVIETS ON WHETHER MOSCOW WILL OR WILL NOT RETALIATE FOR THE EXPULSION OF SOVIET DIPLOMATS FROM CANADA. SOURCE SAID AMBASSADOR FORD HAS LIFTED HIS FREEZE ON TRAVEL BY CANADIAN DIPLOMATS IN THE USSR, AND HE OPINED THAT THIS COULD GIVE THE SOVIETS MORE OPPORTUNITY TO ORCHESTRATE EXPULSIONS. SOURCE STATED CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 05740 251244Z

FURTHER THAT CANADIAN COMPANIES HAVE ALREADY LOST ONE CONTRACT BECAUSE OF THE PRESENT "MALAISE" IN SOVIET-CANADIAN RELATIONS, AND THAT CANADIANS ARE WORRIED ABOUT THE POSSIBLE LOSS OF ANOTHER LARGE HEAVY EQUIPMENT CONTRACT. SOURCE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT A MARCH 22 "LITERATURNAYA GAZETA" ARTICLE (TRANSLATION POUCHED TO DEPT. AND EMBASSY OTTAWA) SHARPLY CONDEMNING ANTI-SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN CANADA AND PRAVDA'S MARCH 18 RECAPITULATION OF FORD-SUSLOV MARCH 16 MEETING MAY INDICATE A TOUGHENING SOVIET POSTURE TOWARD CANADA.

4. COMMENT: WE AGREE THAT THE SOVIET POSTURE TOWARDS CANADA HAS HARDENED CONSIDERABLY SINCE THE SPYING/EXPULSION INCIDENT. IN PART THIS REFLECTS THE SOVIET DESIRE TO CAST THE BLAME FOR THE CURRENT PROBLEM ON THE CANADIANS, THE CANADIAN PRESS IN PARTICULAR, AND THUS TO DEFLECT ATTENTION FROM THE TRUE CAUSE OF THE PROBLEM, SOVIET MISBEHAVIOR. IN PART ALSO IT IS A TYPICAL SOVIET FINGER-POINTING, "YOU-DO-IT-TOO" EXERCISE. MEANWHILE, THE SOVIETS REMAIN VERY CLOSED-MOUTHED ABOUT POSSIBLE RETALIATION.

5. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS SITUATION WILL CONTINUE FOR A

WHILE, BUT SHOULD DIE DOWN AS SOON AS THE CANADIAN PRESS
LOSES INTEREST IN THE SUBJECT. NEVERTHELESS, SHOULD
THERE BE ANOTHER ROUND OF EXPULSIONS OR SHOULD OTHER
ISSUES ARISE (E.G., COSMOS 984 REIMBURSEMENT OR THE
SHCHARANSKIY CASE) A FURTHER DETERIORATION OF SOVIET-
CANADIAN RELATIONS COULD OCCUR. UP TO THE TIME OF THE
RECENT INCIDENT, HOWEVER, THOSE RELATIONS WERE GOOD, AND
NEITHER THE SOVIETS NOR THE CANADIANS HAVE ANY REASON FOR
WANTING THEM TO TURN POOR. TOON

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